1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

515 the streams for the sexes, and they never bathe together. But the Hill Maria does not know the use of soap; occasionally his women follow the practice of the plains women and scour their hair with a plaster of black earth well rinsed out later. His nails are generally long and very dirty. The infant and the toddler are occasionally washed with water from a gourd. Where there is no stream near or water is scarce, the daily ablutions are often performed with water dipped from an earthen water-pot with a [415] gourd ladle, called *paghas* by the Hill Marias and *orha* in the plains, made from a gourd shaped like a large European smoking pipe; the straight stem is hollow and holed at the end; the stem is held near the bowl between the chin and collar-bone or shoulder and water tilted down from the bowl on to the body by dropping the other shoulder, while the hands rub the limb thus wetted. Needless to say, ablutions thus performed are not very effective.

The Bison-horn Maria also on occasion 'washes' with the ladle, but generally is cleaner than the Hill Maria, and is beginning to buy cheap soap in the bazaars. He will wash his hands before a meal, unlike the hill man. He has his daily dip, but generally in the evening only; and the women definitely bathe only in the evening on their way back from the fields. Both bathe naked, but they wash their clothes far more readily than the Hill Maria, living indeed in the 'bazaar' plains with several Mahra weavers in their midst.

514 The Hill Maria, unlike the Hindu, does not wash after defeca-
515 tion, but wipes himself with leaves. The plainsman is learning the Hindu habit. Neither a Hill nor a Bison-horn village is ever as noisome as the average Hindu village of so 'advanced' a tract as the Maratha country of Nagpur or Berar, where at night the village streets are used as a public latrine and it is difficult to pass clean-shod in the morning. The Hill Maria generally retires into the jungle to ease himself, and the Bison-horn either does the same or uses the *bari* or vegetable garden at the back of his house.

356 A Hill Maria's house is really clean only for the first month or
361 two after it is made, and there is no regular re-plastering of the floors with cow-dung and mud. The interior is rapidly grimed with smoke and dust; and if the Maria has any article he wishes to keep clean he stores it up a tree or in his granary. But his house seldom has to last him more than four or five years, after which, his *penda* slope being exhausted, he and the other villagers move their houses to one of the alternative village sites, and his old house is ultimately burnt, either deliberately or as a matter of course in the annual firing of the forest grasses. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is now a dweller in permanent habitations, save for an occasional shift for superstitious reasons. His houses are therefore

[See ch. 11 pp. 418-419. – Ed.]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

might be, they could always obtain a small cloth. Of the men, Glasfurd observed only that they were certainly more scantily clad than any he had hitherto seen; of the women, that their clothing, like that of the men, was scantier than that of other Maria women, consisting only 'of a very small cloth wrapped once round the loins', while 'some of the elder women and children wore only a square patch of cloth, suspended on a cord fastened round the waist, upon which bamboo rings were strung'. 291

The Hill Marias are now gradually learning to dress in the same fashion as the Jhorias and Murias of Antagarh or the Bison-horn Marias of Dantewara, and are wearing their loin-cloths, turbans and ornaments. But in the villages of the interior, and everywhere among the older inhabitants, the old fashions still survive. The loin-cloth is little more than a length of cloth a foot or fourteen inches broad, twisted or rolled so that it makes a strip round the waist about five inches wide or sometimes much less, passed between the legs tightly, so that in front it seems like a bag for the private parts and that behind it disappears between the buttocks, brought out and wound again round the waist, the end being passed through the waist fold and allowed to hang down over the right buttock; this end is called *toṛa* (tail), and in the case of small boys reaches nearly to their ankles, getting shorter as the wearer ages. Above this there should be a girdle of cowry shells, worn so close to the loin-cloth as to be partly concealed by it; but cowries have become unobtainable, now that for forty years or more they have ceased to be currency, and the wearing of the cowry girdle is, as they admit, dying out, though old girdles are jealously preserved. Some wear just a cord instead of the girdle. Glasfurd says that in 1862 Marias sometimes wore, instead of the cowry girdle, a girdle of about ten or fifteen cords of the same form but smaller than those worn then by Gadba women, which he described thus:— [301]

'The girdle is somewhat singular; it is composed of forty to fifty separate cords of about eighteen or twenty inches in length, which are lashed at the ends; it is fastened in front. From the number and size of the cords, this girdle gives the wearer a strange appearance.'

I have not seen anything of this kind among the Hill or Bison-horn Marias of to-day. Sometimes cloth is so short that there is only a cord round the waist supporting a strip of cloth passing between the legs with a flap hanging down over the cord in front and behind. But generally now there is a tendency to widen the loin-cloth, and not to wear much of a *toṛa*; it used to fulfil the useful purpose of a bag for receiving grain allotted for food at harvest and feasts, and indeed, the end of the loin-cloth is still so used. The Tokalor clan of Erpanar in Mangnar *pargana* is said to have obtained its [415]

[Secondary p. 48. - Analyst]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

name because its founder and members, whenever grain was being given out, were found always to have extra long tail flaps (here pronounced *toka*) to their loin-cloths. A broader-woven cloth makes it possible for it to be taken once round the waist in its full unfolded width, so as to cover the buttocks and private parts. The *toga* hangs sometimes over the left buttock, and, in the south of the hills, sometimes in front of the body in the Godavari fashion.

Tucked into the girdle or the loin-cloth are knives with or without wooden sheaths, razors (as already seen), hollow bamboo tubes filled with tobacco, or little tobacco boxes of carved wood or tree-seeds, or of basketry (the last kind is sometimes worn on the left shoulder on a cord passing round the neck and under the left arm-pit); a comb may hang over the buttock from a cord; and occasionally on the Dantewara side a larger knife approximating to the *tanda* or dao used by the Bison-horn Marias and Parjas.

The older Marias wear no cloth on their heads, and no ornaments in their hair. But it is general now to wear an apology for a *pagri* or turban consisting of one folded Mahra cloth wound round the forehead and tied at the back of the head. Youths wear between this and the back or side of their heads tail feathers of jungle-cock, hornbill or raquet-tailed drongo (which they stick into their crown-tuft knots if they have no *pagri*). This head-cloth is often dirty and worn, and looks suspiciously like all that is left of an old friend of a loin-cloth.

Men and women almost invariably go unshod; but occasionally a pair of very coarse sandals of untanned cowskin with a thong over the big toe and another over the four small toes is worn, generally only when there is a cut or a heel-crack to be protected from the ground.

Short of complete nakedness, man could hardly wear less than the Hill Maria in his most primitive state. His scanty frontal covering often leaves little to the imagination in its utter inadequacy. But it is to the fact that he wears so little that he owes it that he is far freer from scabies, itch and ringworm than the Bison-horn Maria, and the Murias and others of the plains, who more and more are imitating Hindu clothes, but are too poor to afford either much washing or spare suits. At the numerous State dispensaries these are the commonest complaints, and treatment is useless because the patients will not leave off the dirty, infected clothing. Luckily, coat and 'waskat' are still rarities in the hills; Bardal Chamru of Kutul, the headman or *majhi* of Bardal *pargana*, and his brother Bardal Boranga, who used to accompany me when I toured near their villages, always arrived coated and waistcoated above their loin-cloths, but would discard the obnoxious and unnecessary

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

411 to the marksman's right. He stands obliquely to his target, with feet slightly apart and body bending forward over the left hip. The nock in the arrow shaft is held to the string of the bow, in the Abujhmar hills by the index and middle fingers only of the right hand unless the marksman is not strong enough not to use his third finger also; the Bison-horn Marias always use all three. The left thumb rests perpendicularly along the inner edge of the belly of the stave, the arrow resting, on the left of the stave, in the arch between the left thumb and index finger. The latter is laid lightly along the top of the shaft and pointed as a sight towards the target. The other left fingers are brought round the back of the stave. The string is then drawn to the rear by the right hand and released. No ring or other protector is worn on the thumb, though it is sometimes cut on the inner side a little above the knuckle.

Glasfurd, in para. 87 of his report, thus describes another form of release :—

> 'All the Marias . . . often use the feet in bending the bow, while they pull the string with both hands. An arrow discharged in this manner, it is said, would almost pass through the body of a man or deer: this method is only had recourse to in elevated positions, such as from the tops of rocks, hills, and precipices, upon any object below.'

Despite many enquiries, I never found a modern hill or plain Maria who could use this method. A few old men said it was used by wandering 'Nahal' hunters, now very rarely met in Bastar; none could remember it ever being used by Marias.

● 415 No quivers are used by any Marias. Arrows are carried in the hand, or by fixing the point of a barb in the hair-tuft, or in a cord tied round the head if bald.

534 No Marias appear ever to use a musical bow on a winnowing-fan
171 over a pot of water as is done by low Hindu castes and Murias around Kondagaon for the *Tija* festival in the month of Bhadon.

The Hill Maria slays a very occasional panther or barking-deer
151 with his bow, but is not a good shot. The Bison-horn Maria, on the other hand, is often a deadly shot up to forty or fifty yards. A young man in a village just below the Aranpur pass, with a powerful bow of *dhaman* (*Grewia tiliaefolia*) wood at fifty paces range sent an arrow through the bullseye of a target which I set up for him against a *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*) tree; it penetrated 4 cm. into the very hard wood of that tree.

411 No other actual weapons are used by Marias, save for an occasional old sword of one of the traditional Indian *talwar* patterns which has survived the general disarming after the 1910 rebellion. But it is as well to describe here the few digging hand-tools used.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

PLATE XI

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HILL MARIA WOMEN CARRYING GOURDS OF WATER

HILL MARIA WOMAN CARRYING A LEAF-BOX OF GRAIN

(Photographs by Baron E. von Eickstedt)

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BISON-HORN MARIA VILLAGE STREET, TELAM, NEAR KATAKALIAN

[FACING p. 118]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

342 of logs covers nearly the whole of the room, except the dark corner
251 where, as among the Hill Marias, rests the *Hanal Kunda* or Pot of
[769] the Departed. The various grains are stored in bamboo bins or in very large leaf-work *chiptis*. Other baskets contain dried mango pulp, fresh mangoes, mango kernels whole or crushed, the mousy smelling flowers of the *mahua* (*Bassia latifolia*), *mahua* seeds, and the fresh or dried fruits of the tamarind (*Tamarindus indica*), *seona* (*Gmelina arborea*), *achar* (*Buchanania latifolia*), *tendu* (*Diospyros melanoxylon*), *siari* (elephant creeper, *Bauhinia vahlii*), the various dwarf palms, and other trees. They store far more forest produce than the Hill Marias, but less grain; their *penda* slopes are
[832] far less extensive, and, as copper coin circulates freely among them, they sell much more of their rice and garden produce. They do not use the various forest yams nearly as much as the Hill Marias.

342 The *narma-lon* is a sleeping room for the women and small
[513] children, and household goods and utensils are kept there. In the *oser* is the cooking hearth, the *akki* mortar holes in which grain is husked with the large *musal* pestle, very similar in type to the Hill Maria *usipal*, hen's nests, water-pots, leaves for plates, etc.
[273] If any of the intoxicating *landa* gruel is under brew, it is kept usually in the cooler and darker *wijja-lon* or *narma-lon*. An interesting utensil seen in many Bison-horn houses is a spoon of brass, like
● [415 an English pipe with a straight stem, and an exact reproduction
326] in shape of the gourd ladles known in the hills as *paghas* and in the plains as *orha*, described on page 66 above. This is called a *kal-burria* or 'wine-ladle' and is used for distributing liquor. It is made by the Gharwa brass-workers by the *cire-perdue* process.

343 There are often side-sheds in which members of the family sleep, or where goats or kine are tethered at night, and poultry roost.

422 The other contents of their houses are similar to those of the Hill Maria houses, but they generally have more tools, weapons, hunting-nets, clothes and jewellery, owing to their growing habit of regular attendance at weekly bazaars and their greater readiness to sell their produce.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

it is not much used among Bison-horn and Hill Marias in comparison to the *salphi* or sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*) which is found wild and is extensively propagated. When the *salphi*, after much cutting of the spadix for the intoxicating sap, ceases to flower, the interior of the stem yields a fibrous pith. This the Hill Maria women (probably the Bison-horn also) pound on a large flat stone with a heavy oval pebble held in their right hand, to separate pith from fibre. The resultant pith 'grain' looks like lime, and is steamed into cakes; an earthenware pot has a little water poured into it, and over the water bamboo sticks are criss-crossed and covered with *siari* leaves as a platform for the pith to be steamed; no salt or sugar is added.

Actually most of the fruit already mentioned is collected by women and children; the men, of course, deal with the toddy and sago palm sap, and their methods will be described in the section on drinking and intoxicants. The men collect those forest products which they need for basketry or rope making, or in finding which there is an element of the chase. They like to roam about with their bows and arrows while their women are busy gathering fruit.

The women gather also various leaves, flowers and seeds as vegetables. They use the young green leaves and the seeds of the sal (*Shorea robusta*); the flowers of the *giril marra* shrub (*Indigofera arborea*); the young curled fronds of bracken in the Abujhmar hills, possibly also on the Bailadila mountains, where, too, it is common (the Hill Marias call it *handa jabba* and the Bison-horn *anda koser*); the seeds of the marking nut tree (*Semecarpus anacardium*; *bhelwa*); the young green shoots, pith and seeds of the bamboo; the fruits of the *ber* (*Zizyphus jujuba*). The digging of forest roots and yams in the rains is one of the women's chief occupations; there are many varieties, and some are now cultivated. In the early rains a much sought after foods are the *khudrati* or *bora* fungus, and the mushroom. Various wild plants are gathered as vegetables from marsh and river valley, especially the *chiur*, the long thin leaves of which are like small hyacinth leaves, and are a favourite food of wild buffalo and bison. Women and men collect large supplies of *siari* or elephant creeper leaves for use as plates and drinking vessels. *Aki* is the Gondi word for a leaf, and the assonance *aking-waking* is commonly used as covering all produce which the Maria collects from the forest.

In August and September the Bison-horn Maria women spend hours swishing a basket[1] over the tops of certain wild grasses in the fields to collect the seeds, which are eaten like the small hill grains.

[1] Hill Maria women also do this, using little wicker-work shields fastened to bamboo sticks to beat the grass seeds into a basket.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

PLATE XV

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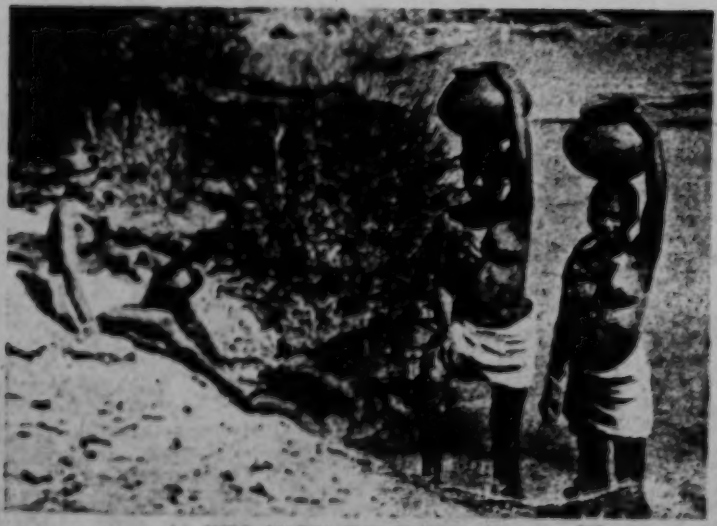
HILL MARIA DANCERS



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HILL MARIA DOMESTIC LIFE
Fetching water from river
(*Photographs by Baron E. von Eichstedt*)

[Facing p. 184]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 735 economic disaster caused by the arbitrary stopping of their *dahi*, *podu* or *jalapod* cultivation. They said that they did not need this for profit, but to save their lives. 'They urged that if *jalapod* were allowed in a reasonable manner they would always be able to produce enough corn even in years of deficient or irregular rainfall. The men said that in the former days of *jalapod* cultivation they usually cultivated a plot for two years and then left it for five or six years, within which short period *palas*[1] and other forest growth grew high enough for them to cut and burn again."[2]

177 291 Mirkal, Pirmeli and surrounding villages are within the orbit of Allapilli and Ahiri, and the average Maria was clearly exposed to Hindu culture contact, of which the outward sign was the wearing of coats and shorts purchased from Ahiri market or from itinerant Mahar pedlars.

342 The *District Gazetteer* records that the Maria house in the remoter parts of the zamindaris is occasionally very substantial, with walls formed of barked logs laid horizontally and kept in position by upright posts, the interstices being daubed with mud and the whole being thatched with jungle grass.[3] There still are many substantial huts in the villages between Allapilli and Lahiri, but I formed the impression that the standard of housing had deteriorated, possibly because of stricter regulation of felling of trees for domestic purposes.

273 656 405 On the twenty-three miles drive from Pirmeli to Bhamragarh we passed several villages rich in toddy palms, and often saw Marias climbing the tree trunks by rough 'ladders' lashed to the trunks consisting of bamboo stems with the stumps of their side-shoots cut short to act as rungs. The climbers carry, slung round their waist and hanging down like tails, thick bamboo tubes to catch the tapped juice, as described on page 168, sometimes also they take up big gourd bottles. The Provincial Government has for a long time pursued a wiser excise policy in South Chanda than in other tribal areas, of allowing Marias free tree-tapping licences for domestic consumption in certain scheduled villages. The licences are valid for three years and the number of trees that may be tapped is restricted according to the population of the village and the number of trees available for tapping. This applies in much of the Maria country to the *caryotis urens* or sago-palm, the juice of which, as in Bastar, is much preferred to that of the ordinary toddy palm. This privilege had been accorded only to 239 villages of Sironcha tahsil and 58 of Garchiroli tahsil. The selection of villages had been somewhat eclectic; some large villages with only a small Maria or

[1] *Butea frondosa.*
[2] *The Aboriginal Problem*, p. 185.
[3] *Chanda District Gazetteer* (Allahabad, 1909), p. 202.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

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[Verrier Elwin

Marvi Bhima and Muchaki Kondi making leaf-cups at Bergum

[End Plate I]

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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Verrier Elwin

Bison-horn Maria mother with her newly-born child at Maranda. Note the arrow driven into the ground where the placenta is buried, and the stone for bathing

[End Plate P]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Good AW32
Muria

142
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The chiefs are assembled

[Frontispiece]

Plate IV

142
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516
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A Muria of Nayanar greets his friends before drinking mahua juice

[p. 12 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

is only a little to be done, the crop is piled round the pole and boys thrash it there: otherwise a bamboo rail is tied to the post and perhaps supported by another on the circumference of the thrashing-floor. A line of men hold on to the rail, sometimes there are two lines on either side, and so they thrash. I have not seen them go round and round in procession, as the Baiga do. 252

A rich man with many fields often employs the chelik to work for him, but it is *polo* (taboo) for the motiari to help in the thrashing. [464]

It is also taboo for women to winnow. A chelik stands on the thrashing-floor and gently shakes the grain from a basket held high above his head: the wind carries the chaff away. Sometimes another man fans the falling grain with a winnowing-fan or big basket and they generally fan the pile of grain to remove any chaff that may have settled on it. [462]

Boys fan bride and bridegroom at a wedding in just the same way after giving them their ceremonial bath. [585]

When the work is complete, the Kada Marenga ceremony is performed, and offerings are made to the Village Mother.

Storing the Grain

The Muria do not make corporate granaries, but especially in the west each large house has a special granary, raised on pillars from the ground. 251

In the house, the dhusir-bin made of paddy rope is often used. A network of siari cords is laid on the ground. On this the Muria coil paddy rope anti-clockwise to about two feet diameter, lay paddy straw on this, pour on grain, wind the rope round, gradually build it up, pour in more grain, pound it down with a husker and tie it. At the top they place a ring of siari cord and slip the ropes through it. Then they beat indentations into the top of the bin and tie the cords along them. This bin is aptly described as the 'boy who binds a cloth tightly round his waist'. 415

Special bins are made for the unthrashed mandia in the *bŏri*. Square boxes are made of date-palm leaves tied to a wooden frame and bound round and round with rope, supported by poles above the ground. The bin is filled with the mandia and closed with grass at the top. Sometimes the walls are of matting.

The New Eating Ceremonies

Before there can be any general use either of crops or the various forms of jungle produce, there must be the appropriate Korta Tindana, or First Eating ceremony, a sort of Harvest Thanksgiving in honour of the earth which has given the crop. The ceremonies at all these are alike, except for the different fruits or grains that form the bulk of the feast; I describe a typical Marka Pandum at Masora in Chapter VII, and need do no more here than give a list of the chief festivals. 796

Irpu Pandum (February-March). The ceremonial gathering of the first fruits of the mahua tree, and a feast at which some of them are eaten.

Marka Pandum (March). A ceremonial feast of the first mangoes and any other wild fruit that may be ready, such as tendu, char or karmata.

Kurum Pandum (August). The first eating of the small grains and millets.

Korta or *Puna Pandum* (September). The first eating of the new rice, together with gourds and cucumbers.

Jata Pandum (December-January). Often called Pupal Pandum, the first eating of pulses and beans, and use of sesamum and castor oil.

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

small pieces. When the Brahmin discovered it, he killed his wife and ripped open her belly in order to remove the meat and thus save her from a worse fate after death. But he found the child with one bit of beef in its mouth and the other in its hand: it cried, "It was not my mother who wanted it, but I myself" and so died.'

This story is popular and widespread. It is said that in olden days, the Maria and Muria regarded beef as taboo. But a Maria woman, like the Brahmin, developed a craving for it and ate some. When the husband was on the point of killing her, the child leapt out of the belly with a bit in its mouth and a bit in its hand crying, 'Not mother, but I'. From that day Maria and Muria have eaten beef.

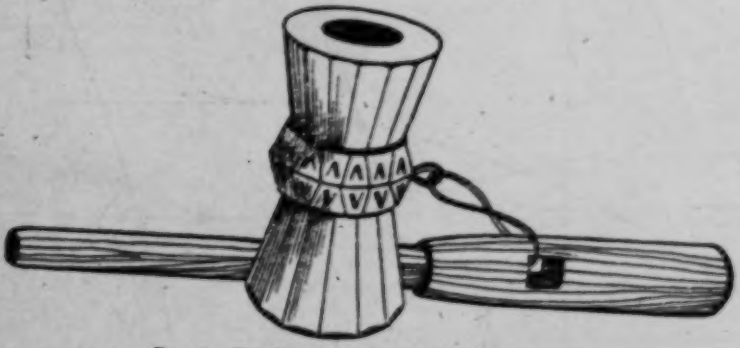

FIG. 6. Uspal used for pounding tobacco or haldi
Length 1' 9"

The Muria take their regular meals, when they are at home, three times a day. At about 10 in the morning they eat boiled rice and a few leaf-cups of jawa. Jawa is the Muria's staple food. It is made of rice, mandia grain, or any of the smaller millets, exactly as the Gond and Baiga of the Central Provinces make pej. Mandia-jawa, however, has its special methods of preparation. The mandia is ground into flour and soaked in water for two days. Rice or kodon is put to boil and when half-cooked the mandia flour is added, the pot filled up with water and rice and flour are cooked together. This preparation is called *ganji*. At about 3 in the afternoon the Muria has a few leaf-cups of stale jawa, and then at 8 in the evening he again has boiled rice, this time with pulse of various kinds.

At every meal, there is chutney of tamarind, mango or mahua; any roots or vegetables available are cooked with chilli, haldi or garlic; meat, fish or eggs may be added. These delicacies vary, of course, from day to day, but the main diet rarely changes.

The Muria's kitchen is the simplest place possible. A horseshoe hearth of earth is made in a corner on the ground; half-a-dozen different earthen pots are used; there may be a wooden spoon and certainly some gourd ladles. Without increasing the cost, the standard of the cookery could be enormously improved; it has always astonished me no one has tried to improve village cookery in India.

When there is a feast, or at a marriage, most of the cooking is done out of doors and by the chulik. Long narrow trenches are dug in the ground, filled

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

of ghotul leaders; it is distributed when a boy or girl leaves the ghotul after marriage; it is a convenient and compendious means of paying a fine. The chelik offer it to their drums before a wedding, and drink it in honour of Lingo at the end of the Pus Kolang dance.

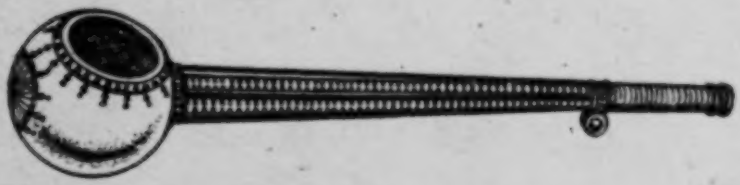

FIG. 13. Brass *orhi* used for ladling liquor
Length 8"-9"

This homely drink, so intimately connected with every aspect of their lives, so accessible to the forest-dwellers, so readily and cheaply prepared, may not be distilled by the Muria in Bastar or by the aboriginals anywhere. Its profits must be divided between the State and the middleman. Home-distillation is everywhere forbidden, and the privilege of the manufacture and sale of the spirit is farmed out to contractors in open auction. The business has thus passed into the hands of the most degenerate type of Hindu and Mussalman adventurer, for few aboriginals have either the means or the enterprise to compete with the sophisticated aggression of the outside world in the open market. These adventurers rob both the aboriginals and the State. They dilute the spirit; they put soda in it to cover the fact of their tampering; they make false returns; they use filthy water in unclean pots;[1] their shops are centres of the most degraded type of alien immigrant into tribal territory.

When the National Congress came into power in 1938, they declared that they would not apply their Prohibition laws to Europeans or aboriginals. It would have been more consistent had they allowed the aboriginal to distil his own liquor and had thus ceased to draw revenue from his drinking habits. The real evil of the present system is not that the aboriginal gets drunk, but that in order to get his liquor he is forced into contact with the worst type of alien and outsider.

In this respect conditions in Bastar are better than in many other parts of India. The Excise Department is efficient and understanding; the State controls the mahua trade, but allows the aboriginal great freedom in the use of toddy and salphi. But nothing can atone for the evil of depriving a primitive people of a natural right.

However, once that has been done, the arrangements in Bastar are as good as can be imagined. The spirit is cheap, only two annas a bottle,[2] and passes are freely granted to the Muria and Maria to purchase whatever is needed for ceremonial and social occasions. As a result there appears to be very little illicit distillation in either Kondagaon or Narayanpur. The figures of prosecutions for the five years, 1937–41, are these:

[1] The riddle 'Man and wife pass in the same lane', to which the answer is 'The two pipes of the still', probably hints at the dirt of the Kalar's out-still.
[2] This was in 1941.

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●415

The bride's bath

Plate XXIV

Chabk fan the bride dry after her bath

[p. 94 (b)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

each other's arms on the sleeping-mat. They often have to lie very close together; sometimes two boys have one girl between them; many of the couples actually touch each other. In the big ghotul real lovers and those who intend to have sexual intercourse may go and sleep in the smaller huts in the compound.

In ghotul where the motiari always sleep in the ghotul, bedtime is a simple matter of routine. In places where they only stay on sometimes, they go singing to their own house or verandah. When they are not sure what to do, they stay on till the Sirdar says, 'Well, girls, are you going to sleep here or are you going home?' The Bekoa answers, 'It's very late, I think we'd better stay here' or 'There's a tiger about, it's not safe to go'. The Sirdar says, 'Then go to your mats at once and don't keep us awake any longer'.

FIG. 77. Tobacco-box in the shape of a wheel
Width 4½"

In Chandabera, the boys told me that the girls often said, 'Let's go home tonight' and ran away. But if a boy was anxious to sleep with his girl, he would ask the Kotwar to keep them and he always did.

FIG. 78. Comb with carved leopard
Width 5"

FIG. 79. The Ammal-gola or tortoise box
Height 4"

2. Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
264
415
291
381

Plate LXXVIII

A motiari serves the boys

The ghotul Kotwar, son of Nari, serving food at Nayanar

[p. 388 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A W32 Gond A W32
Muria

291
415

Motiari of Palli with leaf-cup

Plate LXXXVII

532

Pola festival: earthen bells locks put on the roof for luck

[p. 428 (A)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate LXXXVIII

142
291
301
415

The Nero of Tarbalil with bamboo water-contain

[p. 428(2)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
●445
314

Motiari drying mahua flowers at Temrugaon

Motiari collecting and sifting mahua flowers

Plate XCVI

[p. 492 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

Plate CL

X 983
796
415

Ceremonial axe-cultivation, preparing the Gaita's field

Cooking in the Gaita's field

[p. 652 (B)]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

312
HS
291
142
301
302

Girls fetching water at Battanar

[FACING p. 32]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273
415
417

Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

221
532
273

Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

273
285
415
417

Women making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

415
452
301

Married Maria girl. The love of such young wives for the 'mother's house' sometimes leads to disaster

[facing p. 160]

417

417 APPARATUS--supports (e.g., posts, frames, ladders, scaffolds); fences and gates; pens and corrals; birdcages; apparatus not elsewhere described; etc. See also:.

Traps, snares, and fishing gear 20
Aids to locomotion and burden carrying 48
Looms 236
Furniture 348
Plumbing fixtures 414
Riding gear 498
Nautical rigging and gear 801

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria

are made either of similar but lighter pole stockading, or of what the Hill Marias call *tum*, that is, fencing of grass fastened in vertical bundles between pairs of horizontal bamboo struts, which themselves are fastened at intervals to poles planted in the ground. The floors, walls and partitions are plastered with mud, the walls on the inside, and the partitions on both sides; the women do the plastering, while their men look on. They often do not plaster the veranda wall at all. They sometimes make the side walls of bamboo wattlework instead of pole stockading. They do not char or otherwise treat the bases of the poles before fixing them in the ground. The first post of the house is almost always of the sacred *saja* tree; I have not seen this adorned with bundles of thatching grass in the manner of other Gonds (cf. Russell and Hiralal, III, p. 122), but I have seen two *saja* trees near a house under construction so adorned. The youths sometimes paint the plastered partitions in white with rows of dots, with swastikas like those tattooed on girls' faces (see p. 74 above), or with crude crocodiles or tigers; I have seen women's breasts represented in relief.

The grass (rarely palm) thatch rests on bamboos tied across the roof beams, and is secured against wind by bamboos criss-crossed outside the thatch. The grass generally used is *dab* (*Pollinea argentea*) which appears in the *penda* fields after the first harvest has been reaped, and in the second or third year covers them so thickly that they have to be abandoned. In March, after the harvest has been finished, you will see near all the recently abandoned *penda* clearings extensive *dab* cuttings, the grass being stacked on rough log platforms about a foot and a half above the ground in readiness for re-thatching the houses just before the break of the monsoon. The men re-thatch houses, granaries, pig-sties and temples every year.

The usual form of door is a rectangle of split bamboo wickerwork sliding between two pairs of upright wooden posts. The doorway has often a wicker-work threshold from one to two feet high, over which the sliding door fits. There are always doors in the doorways leading from outside into the veranda, from the veranda to the *angadi*, and at the back of the menstruation room; generally also in the doorways leading into the *lonu*; but I have never seen a door in the front doorway of the menstruation room. Sometimes the whole of this room is not taboo to men, the *binda* or mud threshold that marks the limit of the tabooed ground (see p. 106) being constructed across the floor of the room some two feet beyond the front entrance. Occasionally more elaborate doors will be seen, made of a small hewn wooden plank with tangs of wood left

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 to fire all the *penda* plots simultaneously, and the women take no part in this work. There is no public ceremony before the firing; but the *kasyeq-gaita* starts it for the whole village by firing the first bundle of dried brushwood in his own plot with a bundle of dried grass kindled from a glowing ember brought from his own house; he makes fire with a fire-saw only if no ember is available or if it has died on its way to the *penda*. At Handawada in May 1930, heavy rain fell, and so delayed the firing of the *penda* that the *kasyeq-gaita* and village elders went in deputation to the clan-god Verma Pen of the Gume clan at Toinar and promised to sacrifice a cock to him if he would stop the rain; he only received his cock after he had fulfilled the condition and it had been possible to fire the *penda*. The firing takes only three or four days if the wood is really dry.

241 ●417 Between firing and sowing there is only a short interval in which the villagers must work hard to prepare their fences and field houses. There are no fences between individual plots as a rule, these being marked off either by lines of *til* or roselle at sowing, as already explained, or by laying a few poles lengthwise along the edge of the plots; but there is a general fence around each block of plots, except where there is no risk of animals damaging the crops. A type of fencing found only around Orcha and the Chhota Dongar Mar *pargana*, known as *kokor* (crooked) *garpi*, is a zig-zag stockading of logs laid horizontally on each other, the sides of each projecting angle being fifteen or twenty feet long; it looks like a vast herringbone pattern climbing the hillside. Grass *tum* fences, made in the same way as the *tum* partitions of houses already described, are used where the need for protection from animals is less, and, where bamboo is very plentiful, bamboo wattle-work fences. Another type of substantial timber fence is the *welma* fence consisting of poles laid horizontally one on another, held in position between pairs of bamboo uprights driven into the ground, and tied together at intervals between the horizontal poles; the upright bamboos are generally the two halves of a thick bamboo split lengthwise. I have not noticed in the hill villages the stockades of sal piles driven into the ground which are common among the Murias of the north and are met in Bison-horn Maria villages also.

241 342 513 The chief field-house is really a sleeping platform raised high above the level of the crops on wooden piles, similar to the field watchers' *machan* found throughout Central India, but far more elaborate; the space between the piles below the platform is walled round with bamboo wicker-work or *tum*, and there is a thick thatched roof. As in the dormitories, a fire is kept burning at night below the platform to warm those sleeping on it. Tools and weapons, and cooking pots and food, are kept in the room below the platform,

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

the midst of the grain crops to support them. The cut crops which are to be threshed are stacked on the wooden platforms prepared before sowing, in beehive shaped stacks, called *paki* by the Hill Marias and *kupa* in Halbi.

The women prepare the threshing-floor (*karanu* in the hill dialect), clearing a piece of ground near the stacks of grain, and plastering it with mud. In the centre of this the men erect a thick bamboo railing on posts. It is *polo* for women to take part in the actual threshing. Oxen are never used. For each cultivator in turn, beginning with the *kasyeq-gaita*, all the men and boys in the village combine to thresh (*wisna*). They range themselves in two rows facing each other, with the bamboo railing between them.[1] Holding this with both their hands and supporting themselves by it, they dance up and down, rubbing the ears of corn between their feet. They thresh in this way only *kodon*, *kutki*, rice, *ghatka*, *chikma* and *kikka*; the women pick the ears of grains like *kang* and *bajra* in baskets, and rub them in their hands to extract the grain. The cultivator whose grain is being threshed is expected to feed all the villagers helping him for that day, and if possible to give them a good drink of *salphi*, the fermented sap of the sago palm (*Caryota urens*; Maria, *garga marra*), which is raised from cuttings in large numbers all over the Hill Maria country. The threshed grain is winnowed by men only, winnowing being as taboo to women as sleeping in the fields or threshing. One man stands on a rough wooden platform and pours the grain from a basket held above his head, while another, if there is not wind enough, winnows the falling grain with a basketry winnowing fan of the usual Indian type (*het* in Maria). All the men and women of the village combine to carry the threshed and winnowed grain of each cultivator to his compartment in the long granary. They never measure their produce, but there is no taboo on this account; it simply is that they grow crops for their own sustenance, and not for sale, and it is easy to see whether the grain garnered is adequate for the coming year or not. They do indeed understand something of bazaar measures, for some of their pulses and oil seeds are sold annually to raise the money needed to pay their poll-tax; they make their own measures of basketry, with different traditional shapes for each kind of produce that they sell; and at the bazaar you may see them measuring out their produce in these in front of the Hindu tradesmen to whom they are selling it. Their measures are very accurate, and need never be challenged. If they make them a little too large, they plaster a little mud over the bottom to reduce the capacity.

[1] I have since seen *kodon* and *kutki* threshed in the same way by Korkus on the Betul border of Hoshangabad District, Central Provinces.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32
Hill Maria
Bison Horn Maria

241 In his *mudur erka* (big tree *erka*) he raises *chikma* (*Panicum miliare*), *gatka* (*Panicum frumentaceum*) and *sama*, all crops of the first sowing, ripening by early August, and, as main crops, *mandia* (*Eleusine coracana*) which he calls *gurra*, and *kulthi*, which he, like the Hill Maria, calls *kohala*, both of which ripen with the *penda kulthi* [273] in early December; with him *Eleusine coracana* is an important crop, as he uses it as a principal ingredient in his *landa* intoxicant. In his *marram erka* (brushwood *erka*) he sows only the pulses *urad* (*Phaseolus radiatus*), which he calls *popul*, and *kulthi* (*Glycine hispida* and *Dolichos biflorus*) which he calls *koreng*. The '*os kosra*' millets which the Hill Maria sows as a second crop after the crops reaped in August he calls '*mach kohala*', and sows not only similarly as a second crop, but also as the main crop in his *erka* land for the third and last year of its cultivation, when it is too exhausted to bear anything else.

241 423 Besides the fact observed on page 128 above that, unlike the Hill Maria, he ploughs the ashes, or digs them with his hoe, into his *erka* and *penda* lands, these lands have, therefore, this further great difference from the Hill Maria *penda* lands, that each crop has its own appropriate type of cultivation, and is therefore sown separately, not jumbled up with every other kind of crop in a hopeless welter. He is, moreover, careful to preserve any mango or other fruit trees on his plot. As he retains permanent rights over his plot, whether it is tilth or forest at the moment, he has to be more careful over its boundaries than the Hill Maria, and cannot be content with the temporary sowing of a line of *til* or roselle. At each burning, therefore, he spares important trees or stumps at boundary junctions, which he calls *sarkari* or 'authority' trees, and sometimes he leaves a thin line of trees standing along his boundary when he fells the forest. He generally grows his beans and gourds on these and other trees, not on poles stuck up in the middle of other crops like the Hill Maria.

241 [417] [231] It has been seen that he has always a *bari* garden enclosure round or near his house in the village, which he calls *lon-welung* or 'house fencing', and generally fences with either bamboo wattlework (*wadur-welung*) or a fence of brushwood tied slantwise between horizontal struts (*jhat-welung*). Here at night he pens his cattle, and the ground is thus richly manured to bear maize (*jonna*), *sarson* or mustard (*tarson*) and tobacco (*pogo*)[1] as essential crops, with in these days frequent patches of chillies, tomatoes and other vegetables. *Sarson* is the most paying crop exported from Bastar.

[1] The Hill Maria grows tobacco and a few poor chillies and tomatoes in little plots left clear of dab grasses when *penda* land is useless for grain.

1: Grigson G-5 (1927-1934) 1949
AW32 Gond AW32

Bison Horn Maria

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302

Bison-horn Maria boys repair a drum

[End Plate ZB]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

When this is done and the ground is cooled, the bullocks are brought and chelik and motiari with their ploughs drive the ashes deep into the soil.

The plough is 'the lizard that runs into its hole in the dry tree': it has 'three heads and ten legs': the cowhide reins of the oxen are described as 'the dead bullocks that go before a living man'.

Before the seed can be sown, the Wijja Pandum must be celebrated. This festival, which is preceded by a ceremonial hunt, is held at any time from April to June. Essential to the festival, one version of which I describe in detail in Chapter VII, is the hunt which foretells the success or failure of the crops, the feast on the animals killed, and the sprinkling of sacrificial blood on the seed—some of which is taken away by every householder. In some villages, at the end of the ceremonies, the chelik roll the Gaita in mud from an ant-hill.

The night before the actual sowing, which is sometimes fixed when new leaf-shoots appear on the bhoir tree, all the men again sleep in the ghotul and the motiari stay at home to ensure chastity and thus avoid any possible infection of menstrual blood. On their way to the fields in the morning, they put a small heap of seed at any cross-roads they pass. Each householder has a leaf-cup of the seed that was consecrated with blood at the Wijja Pandum, and sows this after the Gaita has sacrificed a chicken in his field.

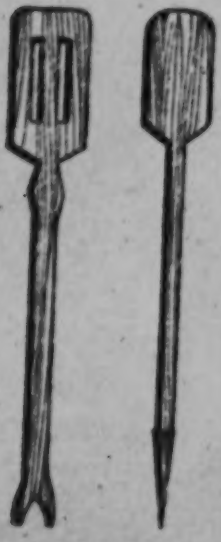

FIG. 2. *Dayi* wooden spoons for stirring food while cooking. Length 2' 9"

The Muria, unlike the Hill Maria, sows different kinds of seed in different places, but like the Hill Maria he sows them at different times. In the west and central areas there are three main sowings.

The first sowing, immediately after the first rains, is of small millets—*turo kohala* or *kosra*, *kikma* and *mandia*. *Rahar dāl* is sown with the *mandia*. Gourds and pumpkins are sown at the same time.

The next sowing is in early July of rice, *kuthi* and *urad dāl* as well as beans.

The last sowing, of what is called *os kosra*, is done in August, though not on ground that has already been used that year. Rice is again sown and *mung* and *kulthi* pulses.

Before the actual sowing of the seed, the Muria prepare their fences, and the field-huts and watching-platforms for the guarding of their crops. The fences are not, of course, as in civilised areas, to keep out their fellow-men but to protect the crops against wild animals: bison and deer are plentiful in north Bastar, especially in the Makri area, and can do much damage to the fields.

There are many kinds of fencing. Sometimes there is none at all; in the jungle clearings a line of poles is enough, in the permanent fields the embankments make a clear division. Sometimes a strong *gawao* stockade is made by placing hundreds of logs upright in the ground. Fences of bamboo wattle are also made.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 A N32 Gond A N32
Muria

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

The Field-houses

In many places, regular field-houses (*ketul*) are built with proper roofs and even walls. For long periods the whole family goes to live in these; there is no taboo on women, even on menstruating women, provided they do not enter the fields in this condition. Here the family cooks, works and lives.

But women are not permitted to go to the *tondi*. These little platforms, raised ten or twelve feet above the ground on poles—'the four brothers have one top-knot'[1]—are generally roofed, and furnished with a mat, a pot for fire, some firewood. The only two places where a Muria boy sleeps regularly are the ghotul and the *tondi*. During the season when the crops are ripening, the ghotul are almost deserted by the chelik who are all on duty in the fields. The rule against their taking a motiari with them is not due to the fear that she may distract their attention from their duties—Muria girls are not accustomed to do that—but because of the danger of her beginning her menstrual period on the platform and so ruining the crops. But it is, of course, very necessary for the chelik to keep awake. An old woman at Masora said, 'When my son goes to watch the fields, I fill his belly with gruel: then he has to piss all night, and keeps awake to drive away the pigs'. It is not taboo to have sexual intercourse in a field; on the other hand, I do not think there is any idea that such a thing would assist the crops.

FIG. 3. Gagra used for cutting grass and brushwood
Length 3' 9"

The chelik climbs up onto the platform by a bamboo pole similar to those used for the sago-palms. Sometimes he has a pulley of ropes to haul up food, water and firewood.

From the *tondi* there are often elaborate arrangements of strings, stretching right round the field—a jerk sets a number of clappers banging or scarecrows swinging.

The fields are also protected by magic methods. A gourd, broom and leaf-cup may be hung up together, or a jackal's head,[2] or a black pot decorated with white lines to avert ghosts hostile to fertility.

Permanent Cultivation

The Muria, as I have said, are not dependent on their axe-cultivation. Nearly all of them now have permanent fields, used mostly for rice. Yet even where, as in parts of Kondagaon, axe-cultivation has been largely abandoned,

[1] Another riddle about the *tondi*: 'There are elephant's bones in the middle of the field.'

[2] W. V. Grigson writes to me: 'Equally common is the use of the dried skull of cow or bullock. In Bastar such skulls have been described to me as *kharchelav*, the term being explained by ideas derived from Hinduism that because in some former incarnation a man had died without paying his debts, when reborn as a cow or a bullock, his skull in this way was working off the old debt by such service after death.'

THE MURIA'S LIVELIHOOD

had to give a penalty feast to its tribe. It had everything ready save char nuts. When it heard where Waddai was going, it promised to cure his son if he would give it the nuts. The monkey went to the house, pretended to fall into a trance, shaking its head and body, and the boy at once recovered. The monkey told Waddai that he should always cure disease in this way.

'The sun had now set and Waddai went half-way with the monkey to see it home. It was very pleased with the nuts and took Waddai to a honey-comb, drove away the bees and gave the sweet juice and wax to him. Since that day, we have eaten honey and as Waddai took the first honey at night, we take it then also.'

The Muria distinguish four kinds of bees: the *bāgh ondār*, which live on big trees; the *satāru ondār*; the small *kitka ondār* and the *lokti ondār* or *mas*.[1] It is said that the hives of the *bāgh* and *satāru ondār* are discovered when they go according to their habit to get water from a trickling stream. Men go along the stream until they notice bees coming and going and then try to follow them home. The *lokti* are easier to find because they sit buzzing outside their hole, and the honey-gatherer is attracted to the place by the noise. Muria observation is shown by this account: 'All the swarm seek flowers and suck their sweet juice. As the bees sit on the flowers gum sticks to their feet. With this they build their hive, and put the juice inside. They build so well that not a drop leaks out.'

'Only a brave man will go for honey', say the Muria. When they have located a hive, two or three men go together; for the *bāgh ondār* (which are blind in the dark) they go at night. They tie grass at the end of a pole, light it and smoke out the bees. Then they place a bamboo ladder against the tree and climb up, though sometimes they cut the tree down to save themselves trouble, and collect the honey in hollow bamboo tubes.

The honey is eaten with wheat-cakes or mixed with flour and made into a sweet bread which is greatly liked by children.

Sometimes if the honey-gatherer is unsuccessful in finding a hive, he engages the Siraha or Gunia who searches for it with the help of the winnowing-fan or bits of grass. When he climbs the tree to get the honey, he calls upon the Dead to assist him.

Should a swarm make their hive in or near a house, it is considered very lucky.[2]

The Muria's interest in honey-gathering is indicated by the number of riddles about it.[3]

[1] Compare Thurston on the Kond: 'The Khonds recognise four different kinds of bees, known by the following Oriya names: (*a*) *bhaga mohu*, a large-sized bee (*Apis dorsata*); (*b*) *sattapuri mohu*, building its comb in seven layers (*Apis indica*); (*c*) *binchina mohu*, with a comb like a fan; (*d*) *nibiti mohu*, a very small bee.'—Thurston, op. cit., Vol. III, p. 363. I have found similar classifications among the Juang and Gadaba.

[2] 'It is considered very lucky if bees or white ants take up their abode in an empty house or at the gate of the city.'—*N.I. Notes and Queries*, Vol. V (1895), p. 32. See also ibid., p. 90. Many Naga actually hang the combs of bees or wasps in front of their houses, perhaps to frighten away wild cats: the Sema say they help to hatch hen's eggs; the Thado Kuki say they ward off evil spirits. Hutton recalls similar beliefs in the Andamans and Malaya, and adds 'I am disposed to suspect the survival of a definitely Negrito belief in the practice of hanging the combs of bees or wasps in the entrance of houses'.—J. H. Hutton, *Diaries of Two Tours in the Unadministered Area east of the Naga Hills* (Calcutta, 1929), p. 6.

[3] A Kharia riddle about the honeycomb: 'Is a golden box' bells are sounding: when you open it, you get sweet bread.'—S. C. Roy, *The Kharias* (Ranchi, 1937), Vol. II, p. 450.

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

585

Ceremonial greeti of the bridegroom his relations

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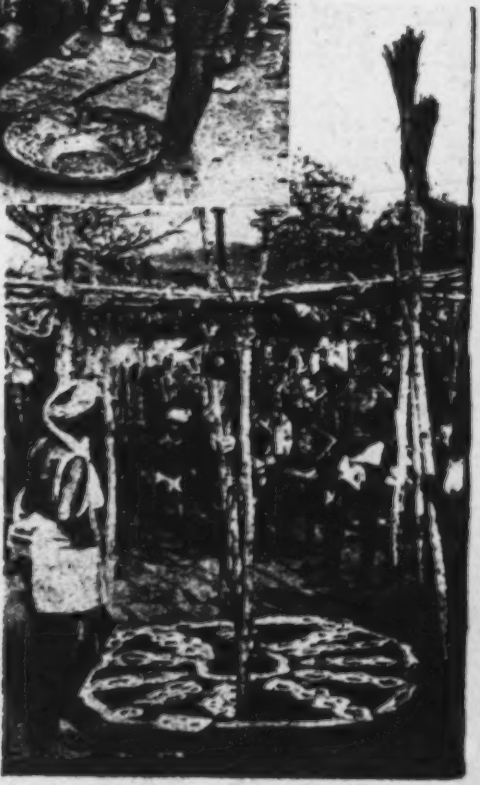

Plate XXII

Marriage booth

[P. 82 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X 883
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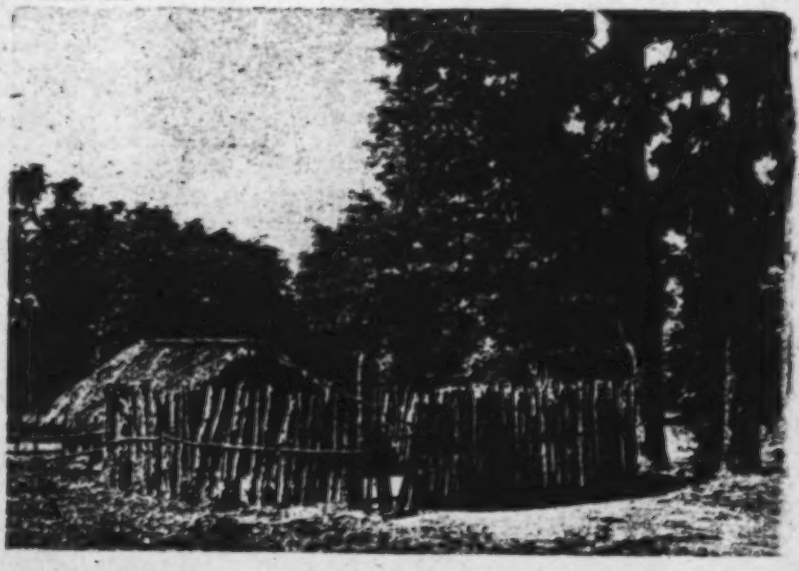
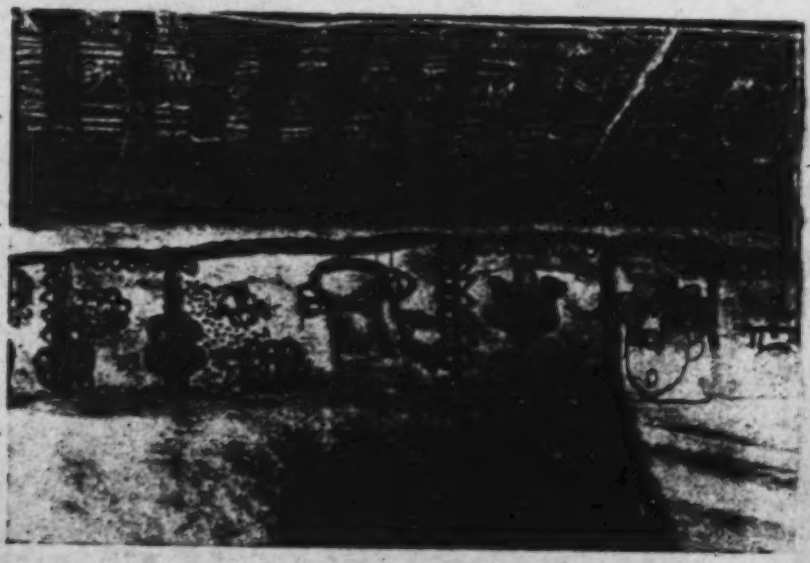
Plate LXVIII



The ghotul at Mason

Black and red wall-paintings in the More Berma ghotul

X 883
353
532



[p. 330 (B)]

2: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1947 AW32 Gond AW32
Muria

X883
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Plate LXX

The Baghbera

The Bandopal ghotul

[417]

[p. 338 (R)]

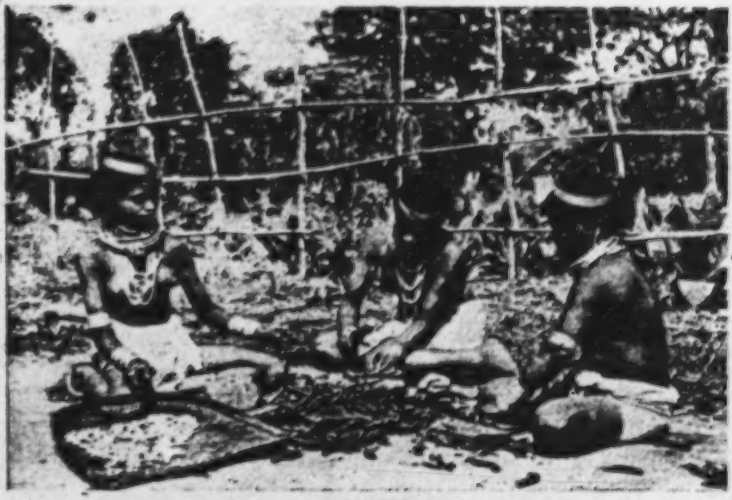
3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

285
301
482

Girl with basket at Marenda

Girls breaking pods at Khutepal

417
252
285
516



[facing p. 29]

3:Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

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415
417

Apparatus for distilling mahua spirit

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273

Detail of memorial pillar of Kopa Dhurwa at Massenar, showing people serving rice-beer

273
285
415
417

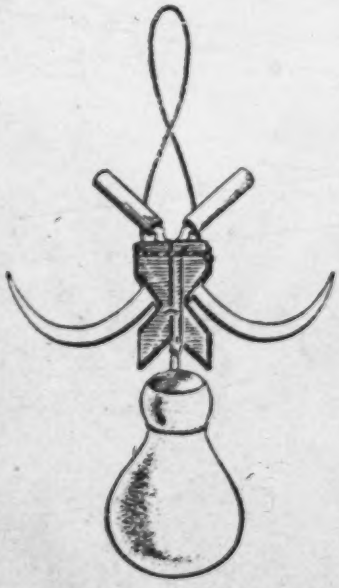
Woman making rice-beer

[FACING P. 96]

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
AW32 Gond AW32
Bison Horn Maria

273 the trunk; sometimes bundles of thorns are placed to deter the thief. The owners sometimes live in little leaf-huts built below the trees in order to guard them. The tree is climbed 477 by a long bamboo pole which hooks on to a branch at the 481 summit. The side-shoots of the pole are not removed and these serve as the steps of the ladder. When not in use it is removed and kept in a house or in some hiding-place in the jungle. Sometimes a large loop is made at the end of the ladder and it fixes on to a bamboo hook which is tied to the tree. Once in Gogonda I saw a Maria getting up a very tall sago palm with great ingenuity. At the foot there was a pole eight feet high fixed in the ground. The climber had to get to the top of this and then, supporting himself upon it with his legs, had to catch the hook twenty feet above him with a long double bamboo pole with a loop at its end. This was no mean feat, and when it was done he had to tie the end of the swinging stick to the pole on which he had been standing and climb up to where he was able to hoist himself to the top of the tree by the branches.

In the Konta Tahsil the method of climbing is the same as that recorded for [273] the Kadir, which again compares with that of the Dyak of Borneo. Long lengths of bamboo are tied to the trunk. The climber ties round his waist an ingenious gadget, called *kach pirik*, holding two knives and a gourd, and he then climbs straight up the tree. In other villages the *mohukum* is used. This is a beautifully made arrangement of ropes by which the climber's body is attached to the trunk, and can be



Kach-pirik apparatus for extracting toddy-juice

3: Elwin E-5 (1935-1942) 1943
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slipped up it. Between his feet is tied another rope which holds them against the tree. He is thus able to get up the tree like a humping caterpillar. A Maria told me that in the evening the people go up the trees 'like a company of monkeys'. When villagers go to drink sago or toddy, they often take with them little leaf-bundles containing dry fish, roasted crabs, red ants or mahua paste.

It is impossible to say how much alcohol is drunk by the Maria. According to the Excise figures in the Dantewara Tahsil and Sukma Zamindari where the population is overwhelmingly Maria, the consumption per 100 in proof gallons is 46.48 and 50.51 respectively. In the Muria Tahsil to the north it is 32.43 in Kondagaon and 58.90 in Narayanpur. Narayanpur, it must be remembered, has a large population of Hill Maria who do not drink rice-beer which may explain why there is a higher consumption of mahua spirit. In the Bison-horn Maria area, there are —according to the Settlement records—about 75,000 toddy trees. The number of sago palms is not known, but is—I believe—considerably smaller.

Mohukum ropes for climbing toddy trees

Illicit distillation was a feature of two at least of the murders. In the last five years 143 cases were detected in the Dantewara Tahsil, 91 in Bijapur, 65 in Jagdalpur as against only 11 in Kondagaon and 18 in Narayanpur. This certainly suggests that the Bison-horn Maria are much more given to illicit distillation than their brethren of the north. But, of course, these figures may only reflect greater energy